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**Permanent Commission on the Status of Women**

*The State's leading force for women's equality*

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**Testimony of  
Teresa C. Younger  
The Permanent Commission on the Status of Women  
Before the  
Judiciary Committee  
Friday, May 8, 2009**

**RE:**

**S.R. No. 24 Resolution Approving The Settlement Agreement In Maureen Allen, et al. v. John J. Armstrong, et al.**

**H.R. No. 26 Resolution Approving The Settlement Agreement In Maureen Allen, et al. v. John J. Armstrong, et al.**

Senator McDonald, Representative Lawlor and members of the Committee, thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on S.R. No. 24 and H.R. No. 26. I am Teresa Younger, Executive Director of the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women and it is an honor to testify before you on this settlement as a way to help move the Department of Corrections (DOC) forward.

Rather than simply waiting for the claims to come to trial in court, the DOC addressed the complaints of inappropriate conduct by enacting a "zero tolerance" policy against sexual harassment, formed a working group of consultants from organizations with expertise, and began regular meetings with a group of representatives of employees. DOC revamped the department that investigates complaints of sexual harassment, provided additional training to investigators and agreed to monitoring of the complaint process by a consultant under the auspices of the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW) for a period of four years.

The PCSW is pleased to have taken an active role in addressing the issues of sexual harassment in the Department of Correction and in helping to improve the working lives of DOC employees. In addition to monitoring the complaint process, PCSW executive director co-chaired the meetings of the working group and contributed expertise concerning women in nontraditional work settings. PCSW also assisted in designing effective training sessions on the issue of sexual harassment to all DOC employees.

The collaboration between PCSW and DOC is a model of inter-agency cooperation and efficient use of expertise to address issues and improve operations. The long and steady joint efforts have led to a marked diminishment in complaints about sexual harassment against DOC employees. Thank you for your attention to this matter.